

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2010 8:44 PM
To: 'sbwhoeop [redacted]'
Subject: Re: H: fyi. Sid

Distressing, unnecessary and regrettable that we are all in this mess. Other than that...

B6

----- Original Message -----

From: sbwhoeop [redacted] <sbwhoeop [redacted]>
To: H
Sent: Wed Nov 17 18:10:42 2010
Subject: H: fyi. Sid

<<http://b.scorecardresearch.com/p?c1=2&c2=6723616&c3=&c4=&c5=politics&c6=&c15=&cj=1>>
Heard about this yesterday. Also Pelosi told Democracy Alliance, "When I go to the White House I feel like I'm dealing with the junior senator from Illinois." Messina was a serious bust there this morning. Goulsbee debated Trumka (Why?!?!?) and was drubbed. Europe memo to follow... Sid

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<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/17/george-soros-obama_n_785022.html?view=print#>
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George Soros Tells Progressive Donors Obama Might Not Be The Best Investment
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/17/george-soros-obama_n_785022.html>

First Posted: 11-17-10 04:10 PM | Updated: 11-17-10 04:34 PM

<<http://i.huffpost.com/gen/220111/thumbs/s-OBAMA-SOROS-large.jpg>>
WASHINGTON -- At a private meeting on Tuesday afternoon, George Soros, a longtime supporter of progressive causes, voiced blunt criticism of the Obama administration, going so far as to suggest that Democratic donors direct their support somewhere other than the president.

The Hungarian-American financier was speaking to a small side gathering of donors who had convened in Washington D.C. for the annual gathering of the Democracy Alliance -- a formal community of well-funded, progressive-minded individuals and activists.

According to multiple sources with knowledge of his remarks, Soros told those in attendance that he is "used to fighting losing battles but doesn't like to lose without fighting."

"We have just lost this election, we need to draw a line," he said, according to several Democratic sources. "And if this president can't do what we need, it is time to start looking somewhere else."

Michael Vachon, an adviser to Soros, did not dispute the comment, though he stressed that there was no transcript of a private gathering to check. Vachon also clarified that the longtime progressive giver was not referring to a primary challenge to the president.

"Mr. Soros fully supports the president as the leader of the Democratic Party," said Vachon. "He was not suggesting that we seek another candidate for 2012. His comments were made in a private, informal conversation that was about the need for progressives to be more forceful in promoting their agenda. He was stressing the importance of being heard by elected officials."

Dissatisfaction with the Obama administration was not limited to Soros's private gathering with donors. On Wednesday morning, Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina received several tough questions during his address to the Democracy Alliance. According to a source in the room, he was pressed multiple times as to why the administration has declined to be more combative with Republicans, both in communication and legislative strategy. Another source in the room said the exchange was not entirely contentious as people were simply expressing frustration about the fact that "we just came out of an election where the right wing and the Republicans distorted what was going on."

Requests for comment from the White House were not returned, though a Democratic operative sympathetic to the administration said that Soros's dissatisfaction with the White House was "hardly news." Sources who relayed that and other exchanges insisted on anonymity, citing the strict rules against talking to the press that come with being part of the gathering.

The tone nevertheless was said to be notably different this year than in past years. In 2008, representatives for Obama were received relatively warmly when they pitched the need to shepherd funds to the presidential campaign. Other progressive institutions were left -- somewhat bitterly -- looking for scraps. But, by and large, the donor base felt their investment had been wise, with Democrats regaining control of the White House and padding their majorities in Congress.

This year, following a drubbing in the 2010 elections and some stalling on major legislative items, the dynamics were notably different. As one attendee put it: "It was a sober atmosphere... people are looking for answers but they are not unwilling to do the work."

While Soros's comment gave some attendees the impression that he'd cheer a primary challenge to the president, the point, sources say, was different. Rather, it is time to shuffle funds into a progressive infrastructure that will take on the tasks that the president can't or won't take on.

"People are determined to help build a progressive infrastructure and make sure it is there not just in the months ahead but one that will last in the long term," said Anna Burger, the retired treasury secretary of SEIU. "Instead of being pushed over by this election it has empowered people to stand up in a bigger way."

"There was frustration," said one Democratic operative who attended the meetings. The main concern was about messaging. I think they are frustrated that the president isn't being more direct. But I did not get the sense that anyone's commitment to the progressive movement was wavering... The general consensus is that support has to move beyond being about one person and more about a movement. I don't know if we've moved beyond there."

One of those "movement" ventures is an outside-government arm to match conservatives in the 2012 elections. For several weeks, discussions have been led by Media Matters for America founder David Brock about the need to create a group that will run advertisements, conduct opposition research and perform rapid response functions. Those talks continued this past week, though disputes have begun to emerge about the most effective role for such a group. As one activist who is involved with the Democracy Alliance noted:

"There are a handful of funders committed to the idea of taking on corporate interests in politics... I think the [Supreme Court's] Citizens United decision [allowing unlimited corporate donations in campaigns] intellectually caused a shift to want to deal with corporate money. The election results split the partners in the Democracy Alliance, not down the middle, between those who say let's fight back and those who say we have to change the rules."

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